



Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Initiative

Early Care and Education Work Group - November 4, 2004, 9:30 a.m. - 12 Noon

Members Present: Jenny Adair, Donna Alliston, Geania B. Dickey, Deborah Gangluff, Jana Gifford, Dana Gonzales, David Griffin, Kathy Mackay, Karen Marshall, Sue Martin, Martha Reeder, Sandra Reifeiss, Vicki Shelby, Kathy Stegall, Ratha Turpin, Cara Walloch, and Paula Watson. **Regrets:** Diana Courson, Joanna Grymes, Dorethea Davis, Thelma Jasper, and Thomas Sheppard

Agenda Item #1: Birth to Kindergarten Report - Sue Martin

Discussion: Sue reported on the meeting of the Birth to Five Licensure Task Force that was held on October 22, 2004, regarding the need for public school licensure for teachers of young children from birth through kindergarten. The Birth to Five Licensure Task Force is a part of the Early Childhood Higher Education Work Group of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System. Dr. Joanna Grymes is Chair of the Early Childhood Higher Education of the Work Group. Dr. Sue Martin, Mardi Crandall, and Vernice Baldwin were facilitators for the meeting.

The Task Force members, who were present, unanimously supported seeking public school licensure for teachers of young children. In a straw vote taken at the end of the meeting, most Task Force members supported the concept of a Birth "through" Kindergarten public school license. A few members supported a Birth "to" Kindergarten public school license. The recommendation and the justification for public school licensure presented at the Task Force meeting will be included at the end of this agenda item.

There appears to be strong support for a dual early childhood/special education license and for the license to be available at the bachelor's level. The decision was made to seek legislative support for an Interim Study Committee concerning public school licensure for teachers of young children.

The Task Force has been invited by Diana Courson, Chair of the Zero to Three Initiative, to submit a

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recommendation concerning public school licensure for teachers of young children. Support was given by the Task Force to do so.

The Task Force has also been invited by Glenda Bean, Executive Director of the Southern Early Childhood Association (SECA), to submit a request that the SECA Board of Directors give consideration to developing a position statement concerning the recognition of the need for curriculum in higher educational programs (1) that supports all aspects of the developing child from birth to eight years and (2) that leads to a public school license or certificate. The Task Force supported the request.

Task Force Recommendation: Teacher licensure for the level of Birth through Kindergarten is a critical need in the State of Arkansas.

Justification: There is no teacher licensure available for teachers of children birth through three years of age in Arkansas. Programs serving young children currently operating in Arkansas are increasingly seeking licensed teachers. Examples of these programs are Arkansas Better Chance, Arkansas Better Chance for School Success, the Arkansas Education Service Cooperatives, and public school kindergartens. Public school pre-kindergarten programs would benefit from having the opportunity to hire teachers with birth through kindergarten licensure. Other programs that would gain from being able to employ individuals with a birth

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Agenda Item #1, Continued: Birth to Kindergarten Report - Sue Martin

Discussion: through kindergarten license are Early Head Start, Head Start, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, Even Start, private, non-profit, and faith-based child-care centers and nursery school programs.

Research supports the importance of the early years as the foundation of all future learning. Professionals working with young children need to have the ability to foster optimum development in all areas---physical, social, emotional, and cognitive, including language---for this knowledge base is critical for success in elementary school and beyond. Several professional organizations have demonstrated an interest in programs for young children by issuing position statements. The Two position statements are: *Early Childhood Teacher Certification: A Position Statement of the Association of Teacher Educators and Guidelines for Appropriate Curriculum Content and Assessment in Programs Serving Children Ages 3 Through 8: A Position Statement on the Association of Teacher Educators and the National Association for the Education of Young Children.*

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Arkansas is investing in programs for young children by allocating significant funding for programs. The investment would be greatly enhanced if professional early childhood educators, who are qualified to teach children from birth through kindergarten, were licensed.

Result: Sue invited persons with interest or portfolio or information to join the task force. The next step for the task force is for them to decide specifically what they want the interim study group to study. There needs to be unity in what the interim study group does.

She made the statement that there is a need to talk to legislative members as private people asking them to support a bill for study of the issue. This must be done within next few weeks.

Agenda Item #2: NAEYC's Associate Degree Program Accreditation - Donna Alliston

Discussion: Donna gave a brief overview about NAEYC's Associate Degree Program Accreditation. She distributed three documents:

- (1) NAEYC Standards for Early Childhood Professional Preparation - Standards Summary.
- (2) NAEYC Launches a New System to Recognize Excellence (professional development article in Young Children • July 2004).
- (3) Recommended staff-child ratios within group size (Table 1).

Arkansas is one of six states that are participating in the implementation phase of the program. The other states are Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and South Carolina.

Discussion followed this presentation.

Results:

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Agenda Item #3: Conference Call (10/25/04) Report - Kathy MacKay and David Griffin

Discussion: Kathy led the discussion on the conference call on Tiered Quality Strategies: A National Overview. This was a 1-1/2 hour conference call on October 25 with many states participating. A Tiered Quality Strategy has been implemented in 36 states. Systems with more than two levels are implemented in 21 states.

Question: Is there a way we can designate a license specialist for each tier? Nothing is impossible. It was noted in even in some better programs,

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some basic things fail without regular visits. You can get away with every six months for better programs. If visits only once a year, the complaints go up. Evaluations of impact must be built in from the beginning. Make sure there is a good PR system in place.

The PowerPoint Presentation related to the conference call entitled, "QRS Audio Conference Presentation Slides," has been placed on the AECCS web site under the "New Research" section.

Agenda Item #4: Tiered Quality Strategy

Discussion: Karen Marshall distributed and led a discussion on the sheets that she worked on related to the tiered system. (A copy of this information is available from the office or from Karen).

The outline sheet developed by the two sub-groups was also distributed and discussed.

The first star is the minimum licensing requirement.

We need to be looking at 2nd, 3rd, and 4th stars now.

Result: Eva Carter, Region VI State TA Specialist from the National Child Care Information Center provided Martha with some dates when she would be able to come to Little Rock and answer some of the questions related to the tier system. The date selected was December 17, 2004, 9:30 - 2 p.m. Everyone will pay for their own lunch. Box lunches?

Suggested that we begin with the four stars but have a funding requirement for the 5th star. Eventually, looking at 5 becoming the 4th star.

TASKS: Martha to make arrangements for Eva's visit and send questions from the sub-group meetings.

Agenda Item #5: Other Work Groups

Discussion: It was suggested that the Parent Education Work Group needs some providers on the group to make sure what they suggest is feasible.

The Family Support Group is working on developing a resource with Parent Education, Medical Home, and Social-Emotional Health groups having representation.

The thrust of Parent Education at this time is clearly defining already available parent training. They are looking for better information.

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It was suggested that Providers should also be on the other groups. Names are needed to make this happen.

The group needs to look at quality for all types of centers/situations involving childcare, including stay-at-home Moms, etc.

Agenda Item #6, Reflections - Logic Model - Sandra Reifeiss

Discussion: Sandra referred the group back to the logic model and reminded that it needs to be completed. She also reminded that this group needs to stay on task.

She reviewed each "Long-Term Outcome" step and summarized the progress for each one as follows:

- Consistent and permanent funding is available for early care and education--
The Legislature has promised to continue funding pre-K until we reach and maintain \$100 million)
- A tiered system for licensing/accreditation is developed and implemented--
The Early Care and Education Work Group is now in the process of developing the components of a tiered system.
- Early childhood educators are knowledgeable of quality early childhood care--
Birth-Five Licensure group meeting to develop new credentialing.

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- Developmentally appropriate practices are implemented--
The Curriculum Committee is working on recommendations for quality programs.
- Quality early childhood programs are available throughout the state--
This is included in funding piece.)
- Parents and public are aware of quality early education--
Defer to Family Support group, tool kit project.
- Diversified multi-media educational curricula are developed--
The Curriculum Committee is working on recommendations.
- Corporations support early childhood goals--
This one still needs to be addressed.
- Transitional services are coordinated--
Ready Schools project - Dee Cox/Sandra Reifeiss.

Agenda Item #7: Adjournment and Next Meeting Date

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Result: Next Meeting Date:

December 17, 2004, 9:30 – 2 p.m.

(Place to be determined.)

Everyone will pay for their own lunch. **Box lunches?**

TASKS: Martha to secure meeting site and make arrangements for lunch, etc.